

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A damage tolerant shaft comprising:
an elongate, annular body extending lengthwise and being symmetrical about an axis;
a plurality of ribs extending inwardly from said annular body and connecting within an interior of said annular body; and
a filler material disposed within interstices defined between said annular body and said plurality of ribs and between said plurality of ribs at a point of connection, wherein said annular body and said plurality of ribs cooperate to define elongate interstices extending lengthwise through the shaft such that said filler material also extends lengthwise through the shaft,
wherein said annular body and said plurality of ribs cooperate to define a plurality of voids extending lengthwise therealong.
- 2 (Original) The damage tolerant shaft of claim 1, wherein said annular body and said plurality of ribs are made of a composite material.
3. (Original) The damage tolerant shaft of claim 1, wherein said annular body and said plurality of ribs are made of a metallic material.
4. (Original) The damage tolerant shaft of claim 1, wherein said annular body and said plurality of ribs are made of an organic material.
5. (Original) The damage tolerant shaft of claim 1, wherein said annular body and said plurality of ribs are made of an inorganic material.
6. (Original) The damage tolerant shaft of claim 1, wherein said annular body and said plurality of ribs are made of organic and inorganic materials.

7. (Original) The damage tolerant shaft of claim 2, wherein at least one of said annular body and said plurality of ribs includes a plurality of reinforcing fibers oriented in a direction perpendicular to the axis about which said annular body is symmetrical.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently amended) A damage tolerant shaft comprising:
a plurality of lobes, said lobes shaped relative to one another such that said lobes are capable of being positioned to define an annular body and a plurality of ribs extending within the annular body, wherein said lobes are elongate so as to extend in a lengthwise direction; and

a filler disposed between portions of adjacent lobes, wherein said filler also extends in the lengthwise direction between said elongate lobes.

10. (Original) The damage tolerant shaft of claim 9, wherein said plurality of lobes are formed of a composite material.

11. (Original) The damage tolerant shaft of claim 9, further comprising an outer layer surrounding said plurality of lobes to thereby further define the annular body.

12. (Original) The damage tolerant shaft of claim 11, wherein said plurality of lobes and said outer layer are formed of a composite material.

13. (Original) The damage tolerant shaft of claim 11, wherein said filler is disposed within interstices between said outer layer and said plurality of lobes.

14. (Original) The damage tolerant shaft of claim 10, wherein said plurality of lobes formed of the composite material each comprise a plurality of reinforcing fibers extending at least partially about a respective lobe.

15. (Original) The damage tolerant shaft of claim 10, wherein the plurality of ribs include a plurality of reinforcing fibers oriented in a direction perpendicular to the axis about which the annular body is symmetrical.

16. (Original) The damage tolerant shaft of claim 12, wherein said outer layer formed of the composite material comprises a plurality of reinforcing fibers extending at least partially about said plurality of lobes.

Claims 17-24 (Canceled).

25. (New) The damage tolerant shaft of claim 2 wherein said annular body and said plurality of ribs comprise a plurality of layered plies of composite material, and wherein each ply extends along and defines a portion of at least two ribs and an arcuate section of said annular body.

26. (New) The damage tolerant shaft of claim 25 wherein said annular body further comprises a second plurality of layered plies of composite material that extend circumferentially thereabout.

27. (New) The damage tolerant shaft of claim 10 wherein each lobe is comprised of a plurality of layered plies of composite material, wherein each ply extends about a respective lobe and defines a portion of at least two ribs and an arcuate section of said annular body.

28. (New) The damage tolerant shaft of claim 27 further comprising an outer layer comprising a second plurality of layered plies of composite material that extend circumferentially about said plurality of lobes.

29. (New) A damage tolerant shaft comprising:
an annular body symmetrical about an axis;
a plurality of ribs extending inwardly from said annular body and connecting within an interior of said annular body; and
a filler material disposed within interstices defined between said annular body and said plurality of ribs and between said plurality of ribs at a point of connection, wherein said annular body and said plurality of ribs cooperate to define a plurality of voids extending lengthwise therealong; and
wherein said annular body and said plurality of ribs comprise a plurality of layered plies of composite material, and wherein each ply extends along and defines a portion of at least two ribs and an arcuate section of said annular body.

30. (New) The damage tolerant shaft of claim 29 wherein said annular body further comprises a second plurality of layered plies of composite material that extend circumferentially thereabout.

31. (New) The damage tolerant shaft of claim 29 wherein the layer plies include a plurality of reinforcing fibers oriented in a direction perpendicular to the axis about which said annular body is symmetrical.